

Major Moves Help Desk

Office of Governor Mitch Daniels

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anorris@gov.in.gov

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Lawmakers reach 'Major Moves' deal

By Theodore Kim
Indianapolis Star

House and Senate leaders today said they had reached a tentative compromise on Gov. Mitch Daniels' Major Moves road-building plan, his most important initiative this year.

The Republican-forged deal means that the chances are good the plan would pass tomorrow when the House and Senate take final votes on Major Moves, which calls for the lease of the Indiana Toll Road. Yet leaders would not predict its passage for certain. Lawmakers said they had

agreed on several contentious points contained in the proposal. Compromises include:

- Mandating that the new I-69 extension bypass Perry Township in southwestern Indianapolis. In addition, the yet-to-be-built road from Indianapolis to Evansville, which the governor has proposed as a toll road, would be free from Indianapolis to Martinsville.

- Initiating a temporary freeze on tolls for non-commercial motorists.

- Reallocating money from the Toll Road lease in northern Indiana.

- Creating a \$500 million trust fund that would generate interest and would be used for road construction.

For days, House and Senate negotiators have sought to resolve lingering differences over the lease plan, leaving its passage through the legislature uncertain.

A private consortium, Macquarie-Cintra, has offered an immediate payment of \$3.85 billion to operate, maintain and collect tolls on the highway for 75 years. Daniels wants to use that money to pay for road projects around the state.

What is Being Said About Major Moves

Gov. Mitch Daniels' plan to lease the Indiana Toll Road to a private entity as a way to get cash quickly to rebuild the state's infrastructure makes good sense.

Times of Northwest Indiana
March 9, 2006

Gary Post Tribune: Politics should not block Major Moves

Sunday, March 12, 2006

Members of the Indiana General Assembly — in some respects — will be voting on Northwest Indiana's economic future before they head home next week.

At stake is Gov. Mitch Daniels' Major Moves proposal that may be the most ambitious highway construction project in the history of the state.

Whether Major Moves becomes a reality hinges on the 75-year lease of the Toll Road for \$3.85 billion. Key to NWI is that \$100 million of that money will go to the Regional Development Authority over 10 years. Highways here will benefit, too.

The Senate took the \$100 million off the table a week ago, but that was little more than a ploy to get NWI legislators to agree to the Toll Road lease.

Unfortunately, Major Moves has become a political issue, with Republicans largely in support and Democrats adamantly opposed. It's not Daniels' highway plan that is at the heart of the controversy, but the lease of the Toll Road to a Spanish-Australian compact.

We suspect the controversy would be considerably less if the leasing of the Toll Road hadn't gotten caught up in the furor over President Bush's plan to have an Arab company operate six East Coast ports. It's senseless to compare the two because the Toll Road lease isn't a security issue.

Other lease opponents argue that the deal will lead to toll increases. That stance, too, is lame in that the state surely will hike tolls if it maintains operation of the Toll Road.

We do understand a concern about the future of those working for the Toll Road. Legislation can protect those employees.

Given what NWI stands to gain through RDA projects and highway development, it would be foolhardy for area legislators to oppose Major Moves for purely political reasons.